

# Comprehensive Review Pittsburgh Public Schools

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## Organization, Instruction, Research, and Operations

Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS)

Michael Casserly, Executive Director

January 10, 2017



# Agenda

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- Introduction and Overview
- Report Highlights
- Major Recommendations
- Future



# Transition Team Goals

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- Review and evaluate organization and management structure
- Examine overall staffing levels in comparison with other major school systems
- Assess impact of instructional program and disciplinary practices on student outcomes
- Review financial operations and business services for opportunities for improvement
- Develop recommendations to help PPS improve student achievement and optimize administrative structures

# Comprehensive Review in Five Areas

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- Organizational Structure and Staffing
- Curriculum/Instructional Programming
- Budget and Business Service
- Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment
- Disciplinary Procedures and Protocols

# Strategic Support Team Process

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- Review completed by four Strategic Support Teams made up of 24 senior urban school executives from eight city school districts.
- Interviews with close to 170 key staff, teachers, and community members.
- Review of documents and data.
- Have conducted over 300 such reviews in over 50 major city school systems

# Organizational Structure and Staffing

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## Promising Practices:

- Many talented and committed staff members at both the central office and school levels who can build a high-functioning organization
- Slightly fewer students per teacher than the median Great City School district 14.0 vs. 16.1
- Somewhat fewer students per school–based administrator than the median Great City School district, 111.3 vs. 114.6
- Lean central office with considerably more students per district–level administrator than the median Great City School district, 465.0 vs. 216, respectively

# Organizational Structure and Staffing

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**Key Finding:** *Organizational structure does not support schools, enhance staff work, or assist effective collaboration across staffing units in a way that would boost performance.*

## **Key Recommendations:**

- Consider a reorganization of functions reporting to the superintendent
- Consolidate all research, evaluation and data analysis functions under a new research office
- Bifurcate operational and financial responsibilities
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of central office staff and networks to better align with organizational goals

# Organizational Structure and Staffing

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## Key Recommendations (cont.):

- Revamp the principal supervisory system under Chief of Schools and reorient to enhance instructional responsibilities and capacities of assistant superintendents
- Appoint or hire a dedicated additional assistant superintendent at the secondary level
- Have Executive Director of PSE and Director of ESL report to Chief Academic Officer (CAO)
- Consolidate federal instructionally-related programs and place under CAO



# Instructional Programming and Alignment

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## Promising Practices

- The Pittsburgh Promise®
- Board's short-term priorities for the superintendent and goal setting
- District curriculum built roughly around PA Department of Education's Standards Aligned System
- All pre-K classrooms use the same curriculum and materials
- Parent Hotline
- Monthly Excellence for All Parent Meetings
- Equity Advisory Panel

# Instructional Programming and Alignment

**Key Finding:** *Instructional systems are weak and disjointed with little in place to enhance student achievement or build the district’s capacity to improve. Ineffective staff accountability.*

## **Key Recommendations:**

- Articulate long-term and short-term goals for student learning
- Charge a cross-functional team with developing a strategic plan for managing systemwide change
- Clarify and articulate which instructional decisions the district holds “tight” and what flexibility schools have to tailor instruction
- Fully align curriculum, assessment system, professional development, and interventions with PA Core Standards

# Instructional Programming and Alignment

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## Key Recommendations (cont.):

- Decide which literacy and mathematics materials to adopt
- Develop a comprehensive professional development plan to build central office, principal and teacher capacity
- Remove evaluative functions of ITL2s to focus on instructional quality rather than RISE implementation and train as real coaches
- Design and implement a districtwide instructional strategy and program for English Language Learners
- Develop an accountability system for central office staff that ensures responsibility for progress on district's academic goals

# Budget and Business Services

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## Promising Practices

- Highly skilled and dedicated staff
- Awarded GFOA and ASBO Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting
- 100 percent participation in direct payroll deposit system
- Universal belief that district schools are clean in their appearance
- Communication and responsiveness of the school safety unit

# Budget and Business Services

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**Key Finding:** *Financial and operations functions could be more effectively organized and strategically managed.*

## **Key Recommendations:**

- Consider reorganizing the financial, operations and business services
- Reinststitute the use of analytical business tools to test assumptions, explore alternatives, validate choices, and guide decision making
- Improve budget development and interim financial reporting to the superintendent and school board

# Budget and Business Services

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## Key Recommendations (cont.):

- Improve the accuracy of annual budgets by considering revenue and spending trends
- Conduct comprehensive review of and tighten internal controls
- Create annual business plans for individual departments and units with clearly defined goals and objectives that roll up to district plan

# Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment

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## Promising Practices

- High regard for research staff
- Data warehouse that houses teacher evaluation data to make staffing decision more efficient
- Construction of data warehouse is an accomplishment to build on

# Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment

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**Key Finding:** *Overall lack of data systems, organizational capacity, and program evaluations prevent teachers and principals from having the information they need to improve practice.*

## **Key Recommendations:**

- Cultivate a data-driven culture across all levels
- Enact a data governance committee to draft policy and procedures around data collection and use
- Develop a districtwide balanced scorecard system to assess overall school system progress with results transparent to the public
- Set up a regular annual schedule of program evaluations



# Disciplinary Procedures and Protocols

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## Promising Practices

- Student Code of Conduct revised to include progressive discipline techniques before imposing suspensions
- Restorative Practices pilot at 22 schools

# Disciplinary Procedures and Protocols

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**Key Finding:** *No system-wide strategy in place to address school climate and student discipline. High suspension rates fall disproportionately on students of color.*

## **Key Recommendations:**

- Implement a districtwide PBIS program that provides protocols for minimizing and lost instructional time
- Consider expanding restorative justice practices
- Consider eliminating suspensions in preK-2 that do not involve immediate physical threats to student safety
- More accurately count long-term suspensions

# Accomplishments to Date

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- Chief of Data, Research, Assessment and Accountability position opened
- Process underway to update preK-5 ELA curriculum to align better with PA Core Standards
- 2017 General Fund Budget includes increases in classroom technology and job embedded professional development
- More inclusive administrative leadership teams/cabinet meeting foster collaboration

# Questions?